

The Gift of Liberty

On October 28, 1886, France gave the United States a gift to commemorate the nation’s first 100 years as a democracy and the alliance between France and the United States that had won America its independence during the Revolutionary War. That gift was a massive statue entitled *Liberty Enlightening the World*, but it is better known worldwide as the *Statue of Liberty*.



Such a gift was the idea of Edouard de Laboulaye, a French intellectual and political theorist. It was 1865, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln had just been assassinated, and France itself was politically divided between those who supported the monarchy and those who craved liberty. Laboulaye hoped that such a gift would not only honor the late President Lincoln, but also spark a desire for freedom and democracy in France. Laboulaye sought the help of the French artist and sculptor Frederic Bartholdi, who shared the same political visions.

Inspiration for *Lady Liberty* first struck Bartholdi while traveling in Egypt to see the construction of the Suez Canal. At the canal’s entrance, he envisioned an enormous lighthouse in the shape of a robed peasant carrying a torch. He even suggested this idea to Egypt’s leaders, but they did not have the money for such a statue. Bartholdi re-envisioned such a beacon of light and hope for the United States. On the day of its commemoration, a million people lined the streets of New York City for a parade, where traders first threw ticker tape from the windows of the New York Stock Exchange.

The Statue of Liberty originally acted as a lighthouse for New York Harbor until 1902, and it even housed a lighthouse keeper. But it is best known as a beacon of freedom for the millions of immigrants entering America after their trans-Atlantic crossing. Her inscription boasts a monumental welcome: “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free.”

October Birthdays

In astrology, those born between October 1–22 balance the scales of Libra. Libras epitomize fairness and balance, often striving to minimize conflict and seek compromise. They achieve this with their charming, sincere, and lovable personalities. Those born between October 23–31 are Scorpions of Scorpio. Scorpions are passionate and assertive yet are known to keep cool and calm. This composure makes them good, steadfast leaders and loyal and honest friends.

- Walter Matthau (actor) – October 1, 1920
- Ray Croc (entrepreneur) – October 5, 1902
- Chevy Chase (comedian) – October 8, 1943
- John Lennon (musician) – October 9, 1940
- Molly Pitcher (soldier) – October 13, 1754
- Bela Lugosi (actor) – October 20, 1882
- Pablo Picasso (artist) – October 25, 1881
- Mahalia Jackson (singer) – October 26, 1911
- Teddy Roosevelt (president) – October 27, 1858
- Henry Winkler (actor) – October 30, 1945

Giants Among Us



On October 2, 1969, President Lyndon Johnson signed a bill creating Redwoods National Park in California. While it is estimated that over two million acres of old growth redwoods once existed along California’s coast, today 133,000 acres of those remaining forests are protected as national and state parks. The coastal living conditions for these trees are perfect, and they get much of their water from the thick fog that rolls in off the coast. These trees are the tallest on Earth, and as such are the world’s tallest living things. Take the redwood known as “Hyperion.” Standing at 379 feet tall, it is the tallest known tree in the world. The tree is hidden deep within a rugged and inaccessible section of Redwood National Park and is considered so valuable that its location has not been disclosed so as to discourage visitors and vandals alike.



Park Place News

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Celebrating October

Bat Appreciation Month

Italian-American Heritage Month

Positive Attitude Month

Mystery Series Week
October 6–12

World Day of Architecture
October 7

National Chess Day
October 9

Be Bald and Free Day
October 14

International Artists Day
October 25

All Hallows Eve
October 31

The Big History of Small Toys

Few toys can light up a child’s face like a dollhouse, complete with its rooms full of miniature furniture and housewares. This October, Dollhouse and Miniature Month, we look at the evolution of dollhouses from ostentatious displays of wealth to mini classrooms of domestic chores, from children’s toys to adult hobbies.

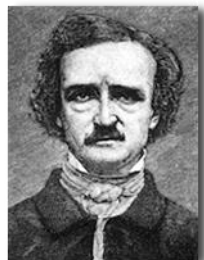
The very first dollhouses, engineered in Germany, Holland, and England in the 17th century, were designed for one audience: adults. These “cabinet houses” were elaborate displays of wealth. Cabinet doors opened to reveal tiny rooms outfitted with priceless little trinkets and objects. In the late 17th century, designs moved away from display and toward pedagogy. Miniature “Nuremberg kitchens” contained tiny pots, brooms, and other domestic tools. Such displays taught girls their domestic duties. These dollhouses even contained miniature people so that girls could also learn how to direct servants.

In the 18th century, England saw the creation of “Baby houses,” so-called because they were miniature versions of real-life dwellings. Rather than display expensive trinkets, the houses boasted miniature replicas of all the home’s wares: grandfather clocks, rugs, wallpapers. Today, visitors to the Art Institute of Chicago enjoy similar reproductions in the Thorne Miniature Rooms, tiny models of European and American interiors from the 13th to 17th centuries.

Attitudes about childhood and play evolved during the 19th century, and so the importance of toys was elevated, and dollhouses became playthings. Thanks to the industrial revolution and advent of mass production, dollhouses were made on a massive scale, reducing costs and widening availability. A growing middle class hungered for the toys. Dollhouses have returned as an adult pastime, allowing grownups to live out interior design and architecture fantasies in expensive and custom-made miniatures. These high-end toys don’t come cheap and cost thousands.

Mysterious in Life and Death

The writer Edgar Allan Poe's most famous works were dark and horrifying, macabre and mysterious. Perhaps it is fitting that Poe's death on October 7, 1849, is as mysterious and strange as the stories he wrote throughout his life.



It was October 3, 1849, election day, when an employee of the *Baltimore Sun* newspaper named Joseph W. Walker discovered a man lying in the gutter outside of his polling station. It was Edgar Allan Poe, but the writer was so delirious that he was unable to move or communicate. Many questions still lingered when Poe died just four days later. The night before his death, still in an incoherent state, Poe repeatedly shouted out the name "Reynolds." Who was Reynolds? Why was Poe discovered wearing another man's clothes? And most importantly, what had befallen Poe to leave him in such a state? There are countless theories about his cause of death, including suicide, murder, cholera, tuberculosis, alcoholism, carbon monoxide poisoning, a brain tumor, the flu, and even rabies. Others claim that since Poe was discovered delirious on election day, he was the victim of cooping. This is when a person is drugged against their will and forced to vote for a candidate. Sadly, definitive evidence does not exist to prove any of these theories. To this day, no one really knows how Poe died.

There is yet another twist in the mystery of Poe's death. Every year from 1949 to 2009, on the anniversary of Poe's birth, an unknown person visited Poe's grave. For 60 years they laid three roses on Poe's gravestone and left a bottle of cognac. The person donned black clothes and a large fedora, carried a cane, and covered their head in a white scarf. Sometimes the "Poe Toaster," as they were known, kissed Poe's gravestone or left a note that read, "Edgar, I haven't forgotten you." The disappearance of the Poe Toaster left yet another mystery to be solved, a fitting tribute for such a renowned master of the mysterious.

Small Wonders

October 9 is Nanotechnology Day, a day to appreciate how small things can deliver big results. Nanotechnology is when chemistry, biology, engineering, and technology takes place on a nanoscale, which is one to 100 nanometers. What is a nanometer? It is one billionth of a meter! Why is it so exciting to work on such a small scale? It means that biologists can work inside of microscopic cells. Engineers can work on surface films that coat eyeglasses, computer screens, and cameras. Scientists can manipulate or infuse building materials in ways that make them lightweight, durable, resilient, and durable. Nanotech has been integral in the evolution of computer technology, allowing smaller devices to carry more power and run faster and more complicated programs. Medicine has been revolutionized thanks to nanotech that can deliver cures directly to cancer cells, bones, or diseases, without damaging surrounding tissues. Everything is made up of atomic particles, so there is really no end to the possible application of nanotechnology.

Left, Right, and Center



Logical people are left-brained, and creative people are right-brained, or so goes the persistent myth, a myth so popular that October had been declared Right Brainers Rule! Month. The idea that the brain has two different hemispheres and that people lean more favorably to one side than the other was largely perpetuated by research conducted in the 1960s. Those suffering from severe epilepsy had the bridge of nerves that connects both sides cut, and doctors showed that each side could act independently of the other. Of course, most of us have our bridges left intact, allowing both sides of our brain to operate together and function in integrated and coordinated ways. For this reason, there is no such thing as a truly right- or left-brained person.

The Funny Pages



Be sure to pick up a newspaper on October 18 so that you can celebrate Newspaper Comic Strip Appreciation Day. The very first comic strips appeared in the giant rivals of New York's newspaper industry during the 19th century. Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* featured the first comic strip in 1894, *The Yellow Kid*, about a down-on-his-luck boy who hung out in Hogan's Alley. Two short years later, William Randolph Hearst's *Morning Journal* jumped on the comic strip bandwagon and introduced a weekly full-color comic strip supplement. Hearst even went so far as to lure *The Yellow Kid* and his creator Richard Outcault away from the *New York World*.

By 1897, comics were in high demand, and Hearst meant to capitalize on the phenomenon. He called upon Rudolph Dirks to create a new strip for the Sunday edition of his *New York Journal*. The strip followed two boys, Hans and Fritz, who were constantly running into trouble with their parents and schoolteachers. *The Katzenjammer Kids*, which ran continuously from 1897 to 2006, remains the longest-running comic strip in history.

Soon, all newspapers wanted in on the comic strip act. In 1915, the *San Francisco Chronicle* debuted the first daily black-and-white comic, Bud Fisher's *Mr. A. Mutt*, which would later become *Mutt and Jeff*. Classics like *Gasoline Alley*, *Popeye*, *Krazy Kat*, *Dick Tracy*, *Li'l Abner*, and *Blondie* began to appear all across the country thanks to syndication. It was only a matter of time before publishers realized that they could create entire books from comics. *Detective Comics* and *Action Comics* soon spawned enduring heroes like Batman and Superman. Even Walt Disney, that beloved master of on-screen animation, started serving audiences a *Mickey Mouse* daily comic strip in 1930. Lucky for us all, comic strips endure with an almost unlimited variety. All we have to do is pick up any newspaper to find our favorite comic characters.

Your Stamp on the World

October is Stamp Collecting Month, so grab your magnifying glass and join the millions of people worldwide who collect, catalogue, and admire these miniature works of art. There is an almost infinite variety of stamps issued by countries around the world. Some are worth only a few cents, but others can be very valuable. The rarest stamp, issued in British Guiana in 1856 and known as the *One Cent Magenta*, was purchased by a collector in 1980 for \$935,000. While for some stamp collecting is a playful hobby, for others it is an expensive obsession. Just as great works of art are forged, so are great stamps. The greatest stamp forger of all time was the Italian Jean de Sperati. He grew up in a family of printers and mastered the trade, but he turned those skills into becoming a master counterfeiter of stamps. His forgeries are so perfect that they have become works of art in their own right. Some professionals cannot even tell the difference between his fakes and the real thing. In some cases, a Sperati forgery is worth even more than the original stamp.

A Howling Good Time



Falling just a few days before Halloween, October 26 is Howl at the Moon Night. To hear a pack of wolves howling at the moon might make your hair stand on end, but there is really no scientific evidence to show that wolves do howl specifically at the moon. The truth is that wolves howl for a variety of reasons, none of which have to do with the moon. Some howl when they are lonesome. Some howl in confrontation. Others howl to share their location or to warn of danger. The howling of a pack is done to exaggerate their numbers to rivals. Interestingly, wolves have been associated with the moon since ancient times. So, too, have werewolves, that gruesome transformation of people into wolves. Luckily, werewolves are also just a myth.